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TOWN OF GRAFTON
GRAFTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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MINUTES
SCHOOL COMMITTEE

November 30, 2021
Grafton Municipal Center – Room F
7:00 p.m.

Members Present:

Amy Marr, Chair
Laura Often, Vice Chair
Liz Spinney, Secretary
Rahul Rathi, Member
Jennifer Connelly, Member

Also Present:

James Cummings, Superintendent of Schools
Kristen Gasper, Assistant Superintendent

1. Call to Order: At 7:00 p.m, Chair Amy Marr opened the meeting.
2. Public Comment: n/a
3. General Business:
A. GCTV Intern Introductions: Bob DeToma introduced the GCTV interns: Sophia Kling, Cadence Tucker and Maddie Otis. The committee welcomed them and the interns shared what got them interested in film and production work.

B. Technology Report / FY23 Budget: Neil Trahan

Neil Trahan recognized his team for their hard work everyday. Neil Trahan reviewed the Spring /Summer Technology Department tasks - MCAS computer based testing, collecting Chromebooks from outgoing 8th grade, collect/sell ipads from/to Seniors, setup and distribute ipads to incoming 9th grade, setup and distribute chromebooks to incoming 6th grade, update, clean and reconnect all lab, classroom and office technologies including computers, projectors, document cameras etc., setup account and devices for new faculty and staff, EOY state reporting, new student registration and student demographic updates. In Summer 2021, the district increased internet bandwidth, replaced the Core Switch (critical network infrastructure at GHS which provides data and internet to all schools), and replaced existing firewall and content filter appliances with one new Fortinet device. These projects were partially funded using E-Rate funds.

New applications were added this year. PowerSchool Forms Builder is used with athletic registration, student work permits, and student handbooks. My School Bucks was expanded to include preschool tuition, bus transportation fees, as well as ipad and chromebook replacements. Clever is a free program that integrates all applications and creates a single sign-on for users. Starting January 1, 2022, the district will be introducing 1:1 Chromebooks for 5th grade. All devices will be housed in a classroom cart. On-going and coming up for the Tech Department - supporting new technology teacher at NGES and SGES, supporting new Math Team, new CNC machine for EdTech /Manufacturing program, integrating school and town phone systems, November MCAS retest, planning for Spring MCAS administration, scheduling process with GHS and GMS, expanding 1:1 in 5th grade at MSES and NSES, SMORE newsletters for principals, planning/ordering devices for 22-23 school year and E-Rate for FY23.

Rahul Rathí asked about E-Rate funding. When you pay your phone bill, you pay an FCC charge which is then used for schools to offset internet and network infrastructure funding. Rahul Rathí asked what happens to devices that aren't sold. The tech department uses ipads as much as possible in classrooms etc. Occasionally, the district will sell them to a third party. Chromebooks have a short life so they are usually not viable for resell. Jennifer Connelly asked if the district would ever sell used iPads to the community. Neil Trahan has reservations about this. Amy Marr asked about the CNC machine. It allows you to connect a design to the computer. The machine was purchased using funds from the iPad resales. Why do the phones go down in the district? There are multiple reasons but integrating with the town will help in many of these situations.

Technology Budget

- 70K for chromebooks for incoming 6th graders
- 20K replace tricaster in TV productions studio at GHS
- 24k distributed denial of service mitigation service
- 7900 Boardmaker for special education
- 20k for Edgenuity
- 10k for LightSpeed Relay
- 12k Sophos Antivirus

Laura Often asked if there have been price increases due to shortages. No. What do we do moving forward to maintain without more COVID monies? That is an ongoing conversation. Liz Spinney asked how the 5th grade chromebooks fit into this budget. Those Chromebooks are already in the district. Amy Marr asked if the 70K for the chromebooks is an annual expense moving forward? Yes. Why is Galileo not in the tech budget? It is in the curriculum budget.

C. District Update: There are great things happening and the superintendent intends to highlight these more. Fall play was terrific, fall sports performed well. The GHS Robotics team won the design award and will be attending the US Open competition in March. MSES Principal for the Day, Raelynn, was terrific! NHS Induction is tomorrow night. GMS Staff ran two community building exercises that were outstanding.

COVID-19- There was an increase of cases at MSES and the district is expecting an increase in positive cases post-Thanksgiving. The district held two very successful COVID clinics and one Flu Clinic. The district plans to recognize nurses in December.

GMS HVAC - the 57 year old HVAC system at GMS will be replaced with an energy efficient system that will include air conditioning. The town will receive \$5.5 million in ARPA funds. The district is hopeful that the committee will agree to fund the \$1.9 million of the project but no decisions have been made.

Total project cost: \$2.24 million

Department of Energy Resources Green Communities Grants for project - \$188,350

Anticipated state funding of \$100,000+

Potential use of ARPA funds - \$1.9 million

D. SWEC Reports: Districts that participate in a collaborative must provide an annual report to their SC. It is in the SC Book. Collaboratives are funded through tuition.

4. Future Agenda Schedule Planning: SEPAC is moving to January. December 14 agenda includes Tony LeMay with a building and grounds update, a literacy report and a budget update.

5. Approval of Minutes: Liz Spinney made a motion to approve the 10/12/21 minutes. Rahul Rathi seconded the motion. Jennifer Connelly asked for a typo correction in the approved minutes. Motion carried 5-0.

6. Financial Report:

A. Warrant: Liz Spinney made a motion to approve Warrant #22 dated 11/24/21 in the amount of \$390,495.17. Laura Often seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0. Liz Spinney made a motion to approve Warrant #23 dated 12/2/21 in the amount of \$287,838.70. Laura Often seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0-1.

B. Preliminary FY23 Budget: The biggest challenge for the FY23 budget will be the transition from COVID funding to a more traditional budget. The preliminary budget is \$42.4 million with unknowns in town funding, FY23 state budget, additional federal funding (COVID, grant funding). Dr. Cummings will be sending the first draft of the budget book in the next couple of weeks.

Budget summary

- Additional positions in FY23
- Contractual increases across five bargaining units
- Zero additional paraprofessionals - working to redistribute paraprofessionals to K classrooms and reduce the need for 1:1 assignments of paraprofessionals
- Maintain COVID nursing levels.
- Summer programming - still not sure what that programming looks like

Budget assumptions

- Level Chapter 70 funding
- Minimal reduction to federal grant amounts
- Carryover of COVID related positions in GPS budget
- Stable special education/OOD rates
- Slight circuit breaker increase - 56k as a result of the Opportunity Act

Variables

- Additional federal funding (amount, time limitations, use limitations)
- Town budget/ state funding
- Entitlement grants
- Special education costs
- Staffing need and mandates / costs

Requested new positions: Special education teacher at GHS (1), MSES (1), Grade 2 teacher at NSES, Nurse (intensive), Arts teacher at GHS (most likely drama), K-6 Curriculum Director.

Dr. Cummings feels good about the initial budget number considering all of the unknowns. Jennifer Connelly asked what drives the decreases in the projected amounts for pre-COVID override funding? Multiple factors (state funding, different personnel needs built in) but based on needs that no longer exist in COVID world. The pre-COVID plan will likely need to be completely reset. The Select Board reached out to schedule a tri-comm meeting. Amy Marr will reach out to suggest a budget committee meeting that involves a smaller group to begin discussions. Amy Marr asked if we have enough counselors to meet the needs of students. Kristen Gasper meets regularly with counselors and feels good about the level of support provided to students. Adding the counselors at the lower grades has made a huge difference. Coordination of work at high school between Sharon Buckley and Patty Ciampi, and the increased hours with Shrewsbury Family Services has been beneficial as well.

7. Policy:

ECA - Building and Grounds Security, ECAC - Vandalism and Fire Policy, ECBB - Grounds Maintenance, and ECE - Traffic and Parking Procedures are being recommended as reviewed with no changes. Laura Often made a motion to approve ECA, ECAC, ECBB, ECE as reviewed. Liz Spinney seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

GBGA-1 - Staff Vaccination Policy

This policy is presented tonight as a first reading. The policy was adapted from other local school committee policies and comments from the last meeting were taken under advisement. Local unions were in favor of a policy but expressed concern about mandated vaccinations. The proposed policy requires proof of vaccination by January 3, 2022 or the employee can be tested at least once a week. If at some point masks are not required, unvaccinated people will still be required to wear a mask. The administration will determine how to verify vaccination status. The committee left some flexibility in case health conditions change or health guidelines change. Some concern expressed over the tight deadline of January 3rd but people are not going to lose their jobs - they can opt for testing. January 3rd also takes into consideration the likelihood of

rising cases after the holidays. Some schools gave exceptions for religious or medical reasons and the committee did not want to get into deciding what constitutes one of these exemptions. Rahul Rathi asked how the employee tests will be administered. The employee will need to procure their own test. The schools might be able to provide testing but has not been confirmed. Amy Marr stated that most districts are not providing tests to their unvaccinated staff. Kristen Gasper will impact bargain with each of the unions and meet with the nursing staff to determine the specific protocols, including the frequency of the testing. Jennifer Connelly asked when the mask mandate was scheduled to end. January 15th. Jennifer Connelly suggested pushing 1/3/22 date out to give the unvaccinated time to receive two doses. The committee discussed and decided that employees could be testing during the time it takes to receive two doses. In terms of part 2 of the policy, Jen asked for clarification. If vaccinated people do not have to wear masks, the unvaccinated will need to stay masked. Are there any legal ramifications to this? No. Amy Marr stated that we have a responsibility to keep children safe and keep our buildings open. There was discussion about the difference between employees and staff. The policy subcommittee will add definitions within the policy and also add a citation at the bottom to include the Governor's declaration. Jennifer Connelly made a motion to accept GBGA-1 as a first reading. Rahul Rathi seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

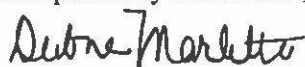
8. Member Reports: Amy Marr shared that the 4th grade vocabulary parade was awesome. The students have been so grateful for being able to have these programs again. Amy Marr is serving on the Bon Voyage committee for seniors and everything is going well. Laura Often attended the ARPA meeting with Dr. Cummings. The town will receive \$5.5 million which can be used in a variety of ways. The ARPA Committee will interview consultants to help them decide how to spend the money. SC is stressing the need to replace the HVAC at the middle school. Jennifer Connelly attended the state cheer competition and the group won 2nd place. Liz Spinney attended the NGES literary character parade.

9. Correspondence: n/a

10. Executive Session: n/a

11. Adjournment: Liz Spinney made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Rahul Rathi seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Debne Marlette
Recording Secretary